

from Beowulf, translated by Burton Raffel

Selection Test A

Critical Reading *Identify the letter of the choice that best answers the question.*

- ___ 1. How can you tell that Beowulf is a legendary hero?
- A. He is the son of a Geat ruler who came to fight in England.
 - B. He is a soldier who fought in battles long ago.
 - C. He is larger than life and is remembered in tales from long ago.
 - D. He believes in honor and loyalty.
- ___ 2. What does the poet mean in this line from *Beowulf*?
- The monster's / Thoughts were as quick as his greed or his claws . . .
- A. The monster's thoughts are kind.
 - B. The monster thinks very quickly.
 - C. The monster has long claws.
 - D. The monster is hungry.
- ___ 3. Why does Beowulf come to see Hrothgar?
- A. He wants to help Hrothgar by killing Grendel.
 - B. He has been sent into exile by the king of Geatland.
 - C. He needs Hrothgar's help against an enemy.
 - D. He comes to seek shelter in Hrothgar's hall.
- ___ 4. How do you know that Beowulf is an honorable man?
- A. He is willing to risk his life in order to earn fame by killing Grendel.
 - B. He is known as a follower and cousin of Higlac.
 - C. His father was the great Edgetho, a famous warrior.
 - D. He refuses to use a sword to fight Grendel because Grendel has none.
- ___ 5. What weapon does Beowulf use to kill Grendel?
- A. his sword
 - B. his hands
 - C. a dagger
 - D. a lance
- ___ 6. To what does the poet give credit for Beowulf's victory over Grendel's mother?
- A. God's judgment
 - B. Beowulf's kindness
 - C. good luck
 - D. Beowulf's powerful grip

- ___ 7. What is the theme of *Beowulf*?
- A. The strongest always win.
 - B. Evil can never be defeated.
 - C. Good always triumphs in the end.
 - D. Sometimes everyone needs help.
- ___ 8. Why does Wiglaf tell his comrades they should help Beowulf fight the dragon?
- A. They had promised to help Beowulf when he needed them.
 - B. Together they can win and get the dragon's gold.
 - C. Beowulf is too old to fight any more on his own.
 - D. They can share Beowulf's fame if they kill the dragon.
- ___ 9. What does it mean when Beowulf gives Wiglaf his gold necklace?
- A. Beowulf wants Wiglaf to kill his cowardly companions.
 - B. Beowulf realizes Wiglaf is the strongest warrior.
 - C. Beowulf is making Wiglaf ruler of Geatland.
 - D. Beowulf is rewarding Wiglaf for saving his life.
- ___ 10. How do you know that *Beowulf* is an epic poem?
- A. It is a poem about terrible monsters and dragons.
 - B. It is a long poem that tells a story about a legendary hero.
 - C. It tells about real events and real people of long ago.
 - D. It was not written down at first but told by storytellers.
- ___ 11. Read the following quotation from *Beowulf*. What is the best paraphrase for the underlined part of the quotation?
- Their courage / Was great but all wasted: they could hack at Grendel / From every side, trying to open / A path for his evil soul, but their points / Could not hurt him. . . .
- A. opening a door so he could escape
 - B. trying to save his soul
 - C. stopping him from escaping
 - D. attempting to kill him
- ___ 12. Why does Beowulf want a tower built for him?
- A. to remind people of his life and famous deeds
 - B. to warn people not to make war on Geatland
 - C. to serve as a landmark for sailors from afar
 - D. to protect the treasure that came from the dragon's tower

Vocabulary and Grammar

- ___ 13. Which word best describes the reason that Beowulf hangs Grendel's arm in Hrothgar's mead-hall?
- A. solace
 - B. writhing
 - C. reparation
 - D. massive
- ___ 14. In which situation might someone most need *solace*?
- A. a victory over a monster
 - B. the discovery of a great treasure
 - C. the sight of Grendel's head
 - D. the death of a loved one
- ___ 15. Which of these quotations from the poem contains an appositive phrase?
- A. "Then when the darkness had dropped, Grendel . . ."
 - B. "And sometimes they sacrificed to the old stone gods,"
 - C. "Remember, / Hrothgar, O knowing king . . ."
 - D. "How the monster relished his savage war / On the Danes,"

Essay

16. Many people think that *Beowulf* develops themes that apply to life today. Write an essay in which you explain why you agree or disagree. Respond to these questions: What are some of the themes in *Beowulf*? Can you see ways in which these themes might be important to you? Why or why not?
17. Some ancient peoples, such as the Germans and Greeks, believed that only by achieving fame and glory will a person be remembered after death. In an essay, tell whether you think this belief is reflected in *Beowulf*. Give at least two examples from *Beowulf* to support your opinion.